

# The Magpiper

January 2015

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## Monthly Calendar

### Thursday, January 8

Board Meeting  
7:00 p.m.

### Thursday, January 15

Membership Meeting  
7:00 p.m.  
Whitman College

### Saturday, January 17

Field Trip: 9:00 a.m.  
Harper Joy Theatre Parking lot

**President:** Mike Denny

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**Facebook Admin:** Judy Treman

**Field Trips:** Paul Treman

**Magpiper Editor:** Ginger Shoemake

**Member at Large:** Shirley Muse  
Priscilla Dauble

**Bird Sightings:** Ginger Shoemake

## Website:

<http://www.blumtn.org>

## Bird sightings:

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## Contact BMAS:

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PO Box 1106

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## Meeting

### Membership Meeting: January 15, 7:00 p.m.

Room 157 Olin Hall, Whitman College

### **PROGRAM AND AUCTION:**

### **THE ART OF BIRD CARVING, its History and Transition from Decoy to an Art-Form**



Artist/Sculptor Ralph Tretheway will talk about the art of bird-carving and his journey as an artist in this medium and describe some of the techniques involved in bird sculpture.

A member of Blue Mountain Audubon Society, Ralph was born in Globe, Arizona. He studied sculpture at the University of Utah in 1972-73. Since 1973 he has worked independently, developing techniques and styles of

sculpture. In addition to original works and 47 limited editions he has done commissions for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and National Park Services. He has done models of endangered bats, insects, rodents and other animals. His work can be found in select galleries, museums and the personal collections. His "Thinker", a frog like Rodin's Thinker is a public art sculpture in Walla Walla, Washington.

He is well known for the "World Record Antlers" series, "Pecan Shell Antlers", and "Vegetarian Antlers". A fascination with astronomy is conveyed in 2 and 3-D works of galaxies, comets and the intangible; (black holes, anti-matter). Recently landscapes, aerial photography and patterns in jasper and agate give added inspiration for abstract paintings.

## **AUCTION**

Famous BMAS Auctioneer Tom Scribner will enthrall and entertain attendees with his humor and stealth. Watch out! Don't scratch your head – you may have just purchased a book, a coffee mug or a print from a local artist. All proceeds from the BMAS Auction go to support our speakers' series, donations to like-minded organizations or help pay for the printing of The Magpiper. Don't leave your checkbook at home!

**NOTICE: MEETING LOCATION HAS CHANGED TO OLIN 157  
(just east of the Science Building on the Whitman College campus).**



## Field Trip

### WINTER RAPTORS

Saturday, January 17, 9:00 a.m.

Winter is a good time to see raptors in the Walla Walla Valley. Join Ginger Shoemake on a trip along some of the roads south of the Lowden/Touchet area and north of town to see what we can find. Of course there will be red-tailed hawks of various plumages and American kestrels, but we will also be looking for rough-legged hawks, northern harriers, prairie falcons and more. We'll look for great horned owls, northern shrikes, and other wintering birds as well.



**Rough-legged hawk** photo by Rodger Shoemake

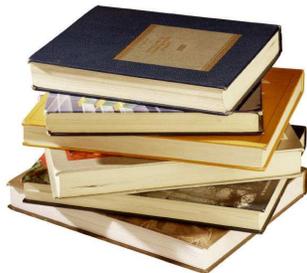
This trip will be mostly by car although we will get out taking closer looks at the birds. Bring a two-way radio if you have one and your binoculars of course. Dress warm, bring something hot to drink and a lunch. Friends are always welcome to join in the fun.

We will meet at meet at the Harper Joy Theatre parking lot at 9:00 and plan to return mid-afternoon. Please let Ginger know if you plan to attend.

**housewren084@gmail.com** or **525-2963**.

### **BLUE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON BOOK EXCHANGE**

Is your bookshelf full of books you have read? Are you willing to share your books with other BMAS members? The BMAS Book Exchange is designed to be a system facilitating the sharing of books about birds, conservation or related topics. Bring your books to the January meeting. Please be sure to write your name and phone number on the inside cover of each book. Books are loaned on the honor system and expected to be returned to their owner within a reasonable time.



## Tom's Post Christmas Rantings...

### **HARRY & DAVID MUST DIE**

*By Tom Scribner*

Okay, I have just again suffered through what is my least favorite time of the year. All this peace on earth, goodwill stuff ain't my cup of hot chocolate. What is worse is the flood of stuff that gets bought, boxed, shipped and received - - all in the name of commerce and at great environmental expense. And one of the worst offenders, I have decided, is Harry & David. Yeah, that Harry & David, the Medford multi-millionaires who each year are responsible for thousands, if not millions, of boxes of unnecessary and unwanted stuff being sent, via FedEx, around the world.

I am angrily focused on Harry & David cuz my wife and I received multiple boxes from them this year. Okay, not from them in the sense that Harry & David, on their own, sent us stuff, but because other people, people who ordinarily have good sense, got caught up in the spirit of the season and felt they had to give us something. Enter Harry & David.

One large box arrived on our front porch, compliments of FedEx, containing other boxes, some of which contained other boxes, all of which, amid the tissue paper and excelsior and foam rubber, contained some edible product, usually fruit. Apples and pears being the primary fruit of the season.

One box in particular really got me going. It was bright red and measured maybe nine inches by six inches by four inches. Inside were two apples! Two freakin' apples! I'll bet the gold, frankincense and myrrh given to the baby Jesus didn't have such over-the-top packaging. Yes, the apples were golden red in color and polished to a shiny gloss, but really!?! A cardboard box, cardboard cross bracing, green tissue paper wrapped (lovingly, I am sure) around each apple, and a foam rubber plug wedged between them to keep each apple from being damaged in transit. I could get apples just as good, for a helluva lot less, at Andy's Market.

Harry & David, I am sure, are, by themselves, responsible each year for the clear cutting of hundreds, maybe thousands, of acres of virgin forest so they can wrap, box, and ship two apples, and lots of other stuff, from Medford to Memphis to your house. Why? Who needs it?

As for the Memphis connection, I read an article in the New York Times about FedEx and its Memphis, Tennessee international headquarters. Every box, every package, every cardboard envelope shipped by FedEx spends a night on the town in Memphis, where, thanks

*Continued on page 4....*

## *Tom's Rantings Cont.....*

to FedEx, is located the busiest nighttime airport in the world. Not daytime, nighttime. Why? Because 600 large jets each night land at and take off from the Memphis International Airport carrying, you got it, FedEx boxes, many of them from Harry & David.

So, in addition to clear cutting hundreds of acres of virgin forest to make the boxes, etc. that they use, Harry & David are also responsible for wasting thousands of gallons of petroleum to make the jet fuel to make the Memphis airport the busiest nighttime airport in the world. Just so you, dear reader, can receive a box load of stuff from Harry & David. Stuff that you didn't really want and didn't really ask for.

I know, I know, the Chamber of Commerce spin on all of this is: Jobs! What I have condemned is jobs. From guys (and, I assume, some gals) cutting down the trees, to some guys (and, I assume, some gals) making the cardboard, to some - - you get the idea - - oil being drilled and refined, to the planes being flown, to the FedEx trucks being driven - - all jobs. Thank gawd, I guess, for the Harry & Davids of the world and all the jobs they create. I ain't buyin' it. Capitalism run amuck, regardless of the jobs created, is not, in my opinion, to be worshipped. And Harry & David are not, in my opinion, to be synonymous with Xmas cheer.

So, think about this. When you send your thank you letter or card (more trees to cut down) to whomever sent you the Harry & David box containing other Harry & David boxes, inside of which, eventually, was some fruit or other edible, maybe you should ask that next year the gift be a contribution, in your name, to some worthy charity or organization. You know, something like Doctors Without Borders, or Oxfam, or Earth Justice, or National Audubon.

If you do this, I will feel better. If you do this, you may feel better. And if you do this, the environment will be a lot better. And if you want a pear or an apple, go to Andy's. Maybe even walk or ride your bike to Andy's, or Safeway, or Albertsons. You'll save money, you'll get exercise, and you'll make a small contribution to improving the environment. And, wait for it, you'll help put Harry & David out of business. After all the sins against the environment they are guilty of, they deserve it. Buried beneath an avalanche of unused cardboard boxes. I love it.

## *The World Around Us*

### **48,000 ACRES TO BE CONSERVED**

*Nature Conservancy, Dec/Jan 2014*

The Nature Conservancy is buying almost 48,000 acres of forest lands on either side of Interstate 90 between Snoqualmie Pass and Ellensburg to protect clean water, conserve habitat for wildlife, create healthy forests that are resilient to climate change, benefit local communities, and ensure that people can continue to hike, camp, fish and hunt there.

These forests, among the most diverse in North America, connect multiple wilderness areas and the Teanaway Community Forest, and encompass the headwaters of the Yakima River, one of the most important salmon and steelhead rivers in the country, and the water source for the rich Kittitas-Yakima Valley agricultural region. This Central Cascades Forests acquisition, expected to close in December, builds on conservation by the Conservancy and many others. For more than 10 years the Conservancy has been weaving together a checkerboard of public and private land in the Cascade Mountains. With partners, they have already brought 25,000 acres of private timberlands into public ownership.

The new Conservancy acquisition is 47,921 acres of Plum Creek checkerboard land scattered amidst the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and adjacent to rapidly developing areas. It will protect 390 miles of streams and hills above three big lakes: Keechelus, Kachess, and Cle Elem. It lies within the Mountains to Sound Greenway, where a coalition has been working for more than 20 years to conserve places for wildlife, recreation, working forests and local agriculture.

This conservation purchase presents an opportunity for the people of Washington State to set a vision for this special land — to create healthy forests, protect clean water, benefit local communities, ensure recreational access and protect important habitat for wildlife.



*In the Heart of the Cascades, sagebrush meadows rise above surrounding forests and offer beautiful mountain views. Photo © John Marshall*

**WALLA WALLA CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS**

<b>Total Species</b>	<b>87</b>	Black-billed Magpie	167
<b>Total individuals</b>	<b>10,628</b>	American Crow	204
<b>Date 14-Dec</b>		Common Raven	37
<b>Number of Observers</b>	<b>40</b>	Horned Lark	2
<b>Feeder Watchers</b>	<b>6</b>	Black capped Chickadee	258
<b>Weather</b>	<b>32 degrees</b>	Mountain Chickadee	3
<b>fog - open water - calm winds</b>		Chestnut-backed Chickadee	1
		Red-breasted Nuthatch	14
Snow Goose	1	Brown Creeper	8
Canada Goose	566	Bewick's Wren	42
Wood Duck	101	Pacific Wren	4
American Wigeon	140	American Dipper	1
Mallard	640	Golden-crowned Kinglet	31
Northern Pintail	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	31
Common Goldeneye	6	Townsend's Solitaire	28
Hooded Merganser	23	Hermit Thrush	18
Common Merganser	6	American Robin	739
Ring-necked Pheasant	23	Varied Thrush	73
Ruffed Grouse	8	European Starling	2432
Wild Turkey	245	Bohemian Waxwing	36
California Quail	382	Cedar Waxwing	132
Great Blue Heron	6	Yellow-rumped Warbler	20
Great Egret	1	Spotted Towhee	21
Bald Eagle	cw	American Tree Sparrow	1
Northern Harrier	2	Fox Sparrow	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	Song Sparrow	176
Cooper's Hawk	7	White-throated Sparrow	3
Red-tailed Hawk	76	White-crowned Sparrow	166
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Dark-eyed Junco	2043
Golden Eagle	1	slate-colored	2
American Kestrel	44	Red-winged Blackbird	26
Merlin	2	Western Meadowlark	cw
Prairie Falcon	1	Brewer's Blackbird	104
Virginia Rail	3	Pine Grosbeak	3
Killdeer	2	Cassin's Finch	7
Rock Pigeon	58	House Finch	159
Eurasian Collared-Dove	60	Red Crossbill	1
Mourning Dove	51	Common Redpoll	29
Barn Owl	cw	Pine Siskin	209
Western Screech-Owl	2	Lesser Goldfinch	4
Great Horned Owl	22	American Goldfinch	318
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	Evening Grosbeak	40
Barred Owl	2	House Sparrow	278
Long-eared Owl	3		
Belted Kingfisher	10		
Downy Woodpecker	46		
Hairy Woodpecker	1		
Northern Flicker	200		
Pileated Woodpecker	2		
Say's Phoebe	1		
Northern Shrike	4		
Steller's Jay	5		
Blue Jay	1		

## Events



Winter is a **WONDERFUL** time  
to bird in the Klamath Basin

# WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

February 12-15, 2015  
Featuring: **RICHARD CROSSLEY**  
and **JENNIFER WU**

**NEW BIRDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
FIELD TRIPS, WORKS SHOPS,  
AND MINI SESSIONS**  
Many old favorites, too

Registration begins in early December  
at [WinterWingsFest.org](http://WinterWingsFest.org)

## Olympic Peninsula 2015 BirdFest

*Come bird with us!*



- ◆ San Juan Island Cruise
- ◆ Neah Bay Birding Excursion
- ◆ Guided Birding Trips
- ◆ Bird Drawing Class
- ◆ Auction & Raffle
- ◆ Photography Workshop
- ◆ Gala Banquet with speaker  
Lyusy Smithson-Stanley

**April 10 - 12, 2015**  
For more information:  
[www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)  
[info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org)  
or 360-681-4076





For lodging and visitor information,  
call 800-942-4042 or click  
[www.olympicpeninsula.org](http://www.olympicpeninsula.org)



[www.visitsunnysequim.com](http://www.visitsunnysequim.com)  
800-737-8462

## Musings by Chris Howard

### Tom Lamb "The Hummingbird Man"

It can be amazing the profound impact a person can have while sitting in a lawn chair in their back yard. Such is the case of Tom Lamb "The Hummingbird Man" who passed away on November 23, 2014. I think it is fitting that Tom passed away in November, perhaps he is following his hummingbird friends to a better place. Certainly anyone who was interested in birds in the Walla Walla Valley had visited Tom's home up on Biscuit Ridge Road on a cool spring or summer evening to find the air abuzz with the zipping around of dozens and dozens of hummers eager to tank up on the liquid fuel from the fifty or so hummingbird feeders Tom and his family had hanging all around his house. At Tom's house you didn't need an invitation. A visitor would park out front of the cozy wood frame home where the sign on the side of the road said "Hummingbird Crossing". Tom and his wife Shirley had built this home, nestled under a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees back in the 1940's. When Shirley became ill, Tom placed a hummingbird feeder outside her window. When the hummingbirds started fighting each other over the nectar, Tom began hanging other feeders and before long he was living in Hummingbird Haven.

It wasn't long after our family moved to Walla Walla back in 1981 that we took our young children up to Tom's on a summer evening and were mesmerized by the seemingly countless hummingbirds that were just an arm's length from the chairs that Tom had for guests to utilize. My wife was able to get one to sit on her finger to feed but she had to be perfectly still...too hard a task for the kids. Tom was sitting out in the yard welcoming guests and answering questions that I sure were asked hundreds of times. Tom told me that he had found numerous nests around the house and on tree limbs down by the creek. Generation after generation of Calliope, Black-Chinned and Rufous hummingbirds raised their young through the generosity of Tom and his family diligently filling the multitude of feeders each day to the benefit of the hummers and the two legged observers. I like to think that Tom's willingness to invite so many curious nature lovers to his home had a positive and long lasting effect on not only their awareness of the marvel of hummingbirds but also the connection between nature and the human spirit.

## *In the Field...by Ginger Shoemake*

On November 26, Mike and MerryLynn found a pygmy owl and four dippers on Mill Creek Road.

I went out with Mike and MerryLynn on November 28. We saw a red-breasted sapsucker at the Waitsburg cemetery. These are west side birds that occasionally show up here in the winter. We then drove up Jasper Mountain and down North Fork Coppei Creek Road. There were very few birds other than juncos until we came across 15 Cassin's finches and several varied thrushes in the elderberries on N. Fork Coppei. We



stopped at the "ladybug" pine tree at the bottom of the hill and found thousands of ladybugs. I guess they thought it was spring because they don't usually emerge until late February. Mike took this photo. The areas in red are

actually hundreds of ladybugs crawling on the tree.

MerryLynn found a peregrine falcon at McNary NWR on December 3. And on December 6, she and Mike saw 5 western bluebirds at Charbonneau Park. They



usually have gone south by this time of year, but these birds seemed quite happy bathing in the puddles as you can see by the photo MerryLynn took.

The Pre-Christmas Count Field Trip led by Mike and MerryLynn Denny was held on December 7. It was a cold foggy day, but 19 people braved the weather and were rewarded by seeing an American dipper actively feeding on Mill Creek.



Joe and Carolyn Corvino enjoyed two spotted towhees at their feeders on December 9.

Priscilla Dauble watched a varied thrush in her yard during the gale force winds on December 11.

December 14 was the Walla Walla Christmas Bird Count. We gathered at Harper Joy Theatre Parking Lot to get our assigned areas from MerryLynn and words of wisdom from Mike. It was foggy and it was cold as you can see by this photo; but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the group.



Only one person was in sunshine the entire day—the lucky one who counted on Mormon Grade. The rest of us experienced fog most of the day.

The count was one of the highest in the history of the count despite the fog. Here is a photo Jim Parrish took of a varied thrush in the Mill Creek/Blue Creek area.



The most exciting bird on the count was a barred owl, found near Whitman College. A rare bird previously only seen a couple times in Walla Walla County. Later the night of the 14th, a Whitman student spotted two of them outside Penrose Library.

There were two other species not previously reported on a count—great egret and Virginia rail.

On December 16, Pam Fisher reported both common mergansers and hooded mergansers on Mill Creek as well as mallards, a great blue heron and a belted kingfisher. Feeders in her yard were full of pine siskins, goldfinches, house finches, juncos and black-capped chickadees.

On December 16, Mike and MerryLynn found 14 evening grosbeaks on Mill Creek Road.

Mike and MerryLynn took a birding friend to parks along the Snake River on December 21. They found a nice variety of waterfowl including canada geese, cackling geese, buffleheads, common goldeneyes, pie-billed grebes and a horned grebe. They also saw a great horned owl and a northern saw-whet owl.

The Bennington Lake walkers found four great horned owls and three long-eared owls on December 23. They also found a hermit thrush and Richard Smith was able to get this nice photo. There were signs of spring on the walk—three singing Bewick's wrens and tiny ant hills on the sides of the trail.



Nat Drumheller is back in town for a few days. On December 24 he came across over 100 yellow-rumped warblers near a vineyard south of Walla Walla, eating rotten apples. On December 25 he saw a Say's phoebe on Frog Hollow Road.

George and Deanna Jameson birded north of Walla Walla on December 26. They saw a large number of red-tailed hawks, two rough-legged hawks, a western meadowlark, two horned larks, a northern shrike and several pheasants.

Patty Keeney had several evening grosbeaks at her feeders on Jasper Mountain Road on December 27. The previous day a bald eagle flew low over the house and pasture.

Mike and MerryLynn found about 1200 snow geese in the fields around McNary NWR on December 25. They also reported 60 tundra swans scattered around on the ponds, 8 black-crowned night herons, 5 great egrets, and one white-fronted goose in with the canadas. At the poop piles they found 18 yellow-headed blackbirds, 3 tri-colored blackbirds plus a peregrine falcon and a merlin chasing all the blackbirds.

Jim and Sue Parrish found two long-eared owls in Walla Walla County earlier in the month. Jim shared the photo on the Blue Mountain Audubon Facebook Page. I wanted to share it with those of you who don't look at Facebook. You don't have to join Facebook to look at the Blue Mountain page and this is a prime example of some of the outstanding photographs that appear.



As of January 28, the official total number of birds seen in Walla Walla County was 259. How many of those did you see? Now a New Year is upon us and if you enjoy keeping a "year list" it's time to start looking all over again. I'd like to hear what you are seeing so I can let others know what birds are in our area. You can email me at [housewren084@gmail.com](mailto:housewren084@gmail.com)

**Happy New Year!**

**LOOK FOR BLUE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON  
ON  
FACEBOOK**

BLUE MOUNTAIN AUDUBON  
Ginger Shoemake, Editor, **The Magpiper**  
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Walla Walla, WA 99362

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**Mission Statement:**

Blue Mountain Audubon Society (BMAS) was organized in 1971 and chartered by National Audubon Society in 1972. The Chapter's objectives are to serve its membership and the larger communities of Southeastern Washington and Northeastern Oregon with the goals to appreciate, preserve and enjoy birds, wildlife, and the natural environment of the area. Education is a primary objective of Chapter activities. Through volunteer efforts BMAS provides educational opportunities, conservation activities and enjoyment of wildlife and wildlife habitat opportunities to members and to the public. The Chapter meets the third Thursday, (September through May) at 7:00 p.m. in the Whitman College Science Building. A newsletter, **The Magpiper** is published September through May and is free to members. Non-member subscription fees are \$25 annually. BMAS is a non-profit 501c(3) organization. Find us on the internet at [www.blumtn.org](http://www.blumtn.org)

Join Blue Mountain Audubon Society – Complete the following information and mail along with a check in the amount of \$25 for your first year's membership to: Blue Mountain Audubon PO Box 1106, Walla Walla, WA 99362

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_